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# THE SCHOOL REVIEW

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## OUTLOOK NOTES

THOSE hardy educational scouts who have led the advance toward better commercial training are likely soon to find themselves at the head of a mighty victorious host. Philadelphia authorities have already voted to establish a commercial high school. The Educational Commission appointed by the mayor for the city of Chicago, in a preliminary report, favored the establishment of such a school in Chicago. Dr. E. Benj. Andrews, the newly elected superintendent of Chicago's schools, has taken strong ground in favor of such an institution. He is especially outspoken in favor of teaching Spanish along with French and German, and his utterances on this subject have been warmly commended by many representative citizens. There never has been any great opposition to the commercial high school anywhere, but almost everywhere it has had to face something worse than opposition—indifference. Something quite unusual was needed to banish this indifference, and, unless present signs are all misleading, the Spanish war has done it. It were surprising, indeed, if education alone of all our great national interests proved immune to the expansion fever. Commercial schools have not been in good odor in the past, partly because we were not a commercial people. Such commerce as we had was forced upon us; we could not escape it. Our conception of higher education was that of three centuries ago—it was for professional classes alone. Europe outgrew this notion some decades ago, and at last it looks as though we had had it shaken out of us.

IN the latest report of the United States Commissioner of Education (1886-7) some hundred pages are devoted to a tabulated statement of the requirements for admission to colleges, universities, and technical schools in the United States. As educators we ought to point with peculiar pride to that table, for there is nothing else in the world at all like it. It will be perfectly safe to say, without a detailed examination, that of the nearly five hundred institutions represented in this table no two have identically the same requirements. Since the college calendars were issued upon which this report was based there has been a great deal of agitation of the question of uniform requirements for admission to our highest schools. That some progress has been made is confidently believed by those who have kept themselves familiar with the course of events; but such progress is as yet very limited in its scope and effect. We have been some two centuries and a half cultivating this little idiosyncrasy of ours; it ought to be very dear to us, and it is. After all, the students are the chief sufferers,—and we are only beginning to think a little about putting their interests first in our educational scheming.

SOONER or later, in every large city in the United States, there has come or there will come a time when the demand for school accommodations will outstrip the financial provisions made for meeting them. With this condition of affairs Chicago is now struggling. The condition is only a temporary one, incident to the rapid growth of urban populations. It is, therefore, the more unfortunate when the remedy applied is in reality a blow to the cause of education. Economy may be absolutely necessary, but where such economy takes a form that radically changes the character of the schools, its methods, if not its motives, may be questioned. Such false economy seems to have been introduced in Minneapolis. A deficit last year was met by issuing bonds. This year (1897-8) the city council refused to issue an additional block of bonds. As a consequence, the schools were

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closed May 1. Bad as this is, something worse is in store. On the recommendation of the superintendent, the following propositions have been adopted: That Greek be dropped from the high schools; that one-fourth of the high-school teachers be dismissed; that the schools withdraw from the state high-school list, relinquishing the \$400 given to each high school by the state, or a total of \$1600; that non-resident students, formerly admitted free under the state high-school law, be charged tuition at the rate of \$40 a year; that students over twenty-one years of age be charged tuition. With a list of comparable resolutions, applying to the grades, we have not here to deal. Those specified strike at secondary education. Beyond question, the Philistines have won a temporary victory in this matter; they have struck a blow at secondary education in the chief city of the state. There can be no doubt in the mind of anyone but a Philistine that if economy is absolutely necessary, the ten-month school year might have been shortened to nine, with much less serious damage than will result from the measures that have been taken. Taking the schools off the state high-school list seems to be in the nature of a personal attack upon the state inspector of high schools, Mr. George B. Aiton, whose very efficient work in this position has won him the respect and confidence of the educators of the whole country. Such "reforms" as these do not bear upon their face the evidences of a high regard for education and a sincere effort to make the most out of a bad situation. They do not display any educational statesmanship, but, on the contrary, a poor brand of school politics.

FROM time to time various friends of the SCHOOL REVIEW have suggested that an important addition might be made to the usefulness of the journal by systematic and careful reports of progress in the field of education, and especially of secondary education, made in foreign countries. As a matter of fact, this was one of the chief purposes of the editor of the SCHOOL REVIEW from, and before, its beginning. There were two ways of making such a report, the first by reading the English, French, German, and Italian

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exchanges, and making translations and clippings; the second, by securing a trained correspondent in each country to be represented. The first method was easy to inaugurate and comparatively inexpensive; it was tried, and has been gradually abandoned, for the reason that no outsider, however well informed, can gain and give an accurate view of the vital movements in education, or any other field, solely from a study of the newspapers. To inaugurate the second plan has required, among other things, time. Last month we published a letter from Mr. Hill, editor of the London *Educational Review*, on English Education. Mr. Hill will contribute two more articles during the year. Professor Otto Thiergen, of Dresden, who will act as our German representative, will also write three letters a year. A representative from France will soon be secured. These three countries are of most interest, educationally, to Americans, and readers of the SCHOOL REVIEW will be able in the future to keep abreast of current movements in those lands with the least possible labor, and, it is believed, with profit and pleasure.

C. H. THURBER